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**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, February 16, 2023, 6:35 p.m.**

**In person: Basement of the Whitewater Township Building, 44 Main Street, Cobden ON**

**Online through Google Meet**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

**+1 587-978-1050 (PIN 460326449)**

1. **Call to Order and Record of Attendance**

The meeting of the Muskrat Watershed Council was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

**Attendance:**

**Present:**  Karen Coulas, Rene Coulas, Barbara Green, Debbie MacDonald, Gerry Rook, Evelyn St. Amour, Greg Stasyna, Dave Thomassin, Amanda Walt, Michael Walt

**Regrets:**  Andrea Bishop, Anna-Maria Blum, Andy Laird, Jeff Reeves

**Council Representative Present:**

Claus Trost, Laurentian Valley Township

Mike Moore, Township of Whitewater Region

**Council Representative Regrets:**

Chris Olmstead, Township of Whitewater Region

1. **Adoption of Agenda**

Claus approved the agenda, Debbie seconded it.

**Approval of minutes from January 19, 2023 meeting:**

Gerry approved the minutes, Rene seconded.

1. **Treasurer’s Report- Debbie**

See attached treasurer’s report.

SBCNA Bingo

We will receive our Bingo Charity money on Feb. 21, 2023.

Karen agreed to join Debbie to volunteer on Feb. 19, 2023, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm.

1. **Directors’ Reports**

**Agricultural Committee – Karen**

Mechanical Planting and Replants

The mechanical planting is being set up. The plants have been purchased and the project will go ahead as planned this spring (maybe in April) at a property on Faught Road. We have a contractor who will plant 9-10 acres by machine. For the replanting, Watersheds Canada needs to know by Tuesday, Feb. 21 where we intend to replant. We have names of several landowners who are interested in having replanting done on their land in the spring. Karen will know more on February 21.

**Science Committee – Dave**

Native and Invasive Species

Dave met with Jody Nicholas on February 15. She will design this project on her own time. She gave Dave an estimate of her consulting fee for about 10-20 hours a week of work. It will take her about two weeks to design the whole project, which will involve a survey of invasive species around the watershed. She recommends not surveying all the streams but will do the main ones where they enter the lake. We could complete the whole project in two weeks for no more than seven lakes, using spot sampling and random sampling.

Cobden Marsh

Mike Moore will check with the township treasurer about the status of the grant for more work on the berm.

**Communications & Media - Amanda**

Muskrat Watershed Council pamphlet tri-fold

Amanda shared her screen and explained the updated pamphlet. She used our earlier pamphlet and other online information to update the document. It was produced using software with a common licence so we have permission to print and distribute it. Dave will put it in our One Drive. We will print a small number of copies to start with, in case we discover any typos. Michael suggested we give pamphlets to local businesses that support MWC, to display on their counters.

Content for the Whitewater Region website

Amanda used the same style as the historical society but added information from our website, with workable links. Karen will send Amanda the contact information for Carmen Miller, Municipal Clerk, and Amanda will contact her to post our content. Barb suggested we include the MWC logo.

Farmer’s Daughter Honey

Amanda met with the owner of Farmer’s Daughter Honey and asked about her business and why she donated to MWC. Amanda will write a draft article based on her interview, which she will post on the MWC blog.

**Fundraising Committee Update - Karen**

Grant Connect

Dave and Karen met online with a representative from Grant Connect, a website that provides information for charities and environmental groups about grants they might apply for. The Grant Connect researchers are always updating their website which provides information about federal and provincial grants as well as grants from smaller personal foundations. Charities can look on the site to see what kind of organizations each funder gives grants to and then can decide which ones to apply for. The site includes templates, toolkits and live webinars. The price to subscribe is $629 per year or $1,258 for two years. There is a free 48-hour trial as well as a coupon for one free month. You can pay bimonthly. Karen thinks this would save us searching everywhere for grants. Even one grant would make it worthwhile. We could maybe find a community volunteer to look through the website for us and find possible grants we could apply for. Rene moved that we purchase a one-year subscription for $629. Claus seconded. All were in favour. Dave will set up the details.

1. **Old Business**

Cobden Beach - Township and Health Board Discussion - Karen

Karen met with Ivan Burton, Chief Administrative Officer of the Township, Mayor Neil Nicholson and the health unit to find a way to keep the beach open after blue-green algae has been found. Last year the beach was closed for most of the summer due to the health unit’s warning about blue-green algae early in the season. The health unit supports the idea of going to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks to try to improve the situation. The health unit has made a new pamphlet about blue-green algae which Karen will send to Dave to keep on our One Drive.

Billboards - Rene

Karen sent an email to township and they are agreeable to having the billboard. We could maybe install it in May. Rene will look after getting the building materials and putting up the sign. We need to decide how to handle advertising by local businesses on the sign. Evelyn, Rene, Karen, Debbie and Amanda have formed a committee and will meet to discuss this. Claus suggested putting up the sign with our contact information on it and also advertising on social media and in the Eganville Leader. We could start with four businesses, one on each corner of the sign. The price we charge for ads could be $169/year.

Committee to Amend Bylaws

The township is amending its bylaws concerning the replanting of trees and vegetation that are removed for new waterfront builds. Claus will see if the bylaws for the County already include a clause for replacing ground cover/trees removed on new builds. If so, we may not need to approach the township on changing their bylaws as it will already be covered.

Strategic Plan Review - Barb

Barb, Karen, Dave and Jeff met on February 6 to revise the MWC Strategic Plan. Barb has sent out the revised Strategic Plan for comments. Next month we will discuss forming another committee to revise our bylaws, which will be in a separate document. We will have to vote on any revisions to our bylaws at the AGM.

Tenth Anniversary of MWC

Even though the Township of Whitewater and the Ministry of Natural Resources co-sponsored a public Muskrat Lake Water Quality Symposium on October 5, 2013, which led to the creation of the Muskrat Watershed Council, we have decided to celebrate our founding date as the day we held our first AGM in August 2014. So our 10th anniversary celebrations will happen in 2024.

MWC Volunteer of the Year

Dave Thomassin is MWC’s 2023 Volunteer of the Year. Amanda will interview Dave in late March and write a volunteer profile for publication.

1. **Other/New Business**

Compressors

Michael would like to get the new compressors for the beach. He will call Rene next week to set up a time for Michael to pick these up.

**Next Meeting:**

March 16, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

**In person: Basement of the Whitewater Township Building, 44 Main Street, Cobden**

**Online: Through Google Meet**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

**+1 587-978-1050 (PIN 460326449)**

1. Adjournment: 8:05 p.m.

**Minutes recorded and submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Barbara Green, Secretary, Muskrat Watershed Council

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Karen Coulas, Chair, Muskrat Watershed Council

DON’T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MWC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023!

COST IS $20 PER MEMBERSHIP

IT’S EASY TO RENEW - JUST SEND AN E-TRANSFER TO:

 muskratwatershedcouncil@gmail.com

(Please put your name and email address in the message box so we can email your tax receipt.)

